

William Talbert House  
215 North Mill Street  
Lexington  
Fayette County  
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-102

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12-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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24-LEX,  
12-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM B. TALBERT HOUSE

HABS No. KY-102

Location: 215 North Mill Street, Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky, 40508.

Present Owner: Bluegrass Trust for Historic Preservation, John Hunt Morgan House, 20 North Mill Street, Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky, 40508.

Present Occupant: Mr. William Floyd; Mr. and Mrs. William Turner.

Present Use: Duplex apartments.

Significance: A fine example of the Victorian style, the Talbert House combines an exuberant exterior with an elegant interior.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca.1879-80 (based upon deed information).
2. Architect: According to the late Mrs. Willis (Elizabeth Shryock) Field, 215 North Mill Street was designed and built by Phelix L. Lundin. Mrs. Field also asserted the interior staircase was designed by her father, Cincinnatus Shryock.
3. Original and subsequent owners:
 

Property conveyed to Mrs. Maria Dudley by A. D. Hunt, surviving executor of John W. Hunt, and trustee of Henrietta Morgan, deed dated May 19, 1879 (Deed Book 158-620, Fayette County Court House, Lexington, Kentucky).

Property conveyed to Minnie C. Talbert by Security Trust Company w/u of Maria B. Dudley, deed dated November 12, 1909 (Deed Book 853-71, Fayette County Court House, Lexington, Kentucky).

Property passed to son, William B. Talbert, Lexington, Kentucky, whose wife sold it to The Bluegrass Trust for Historic Preservation in 1966 (Bluegrass Trust for Historic Preservation, 201 North Mill Street, Lexington, Kentucky).
4. Original plans, construction: None known.
5. Alterations and additions: Interiors altered c.1967 for use as duplex apartments.

6. Site and property descriptions: Beginning at the south corner of the lot of Benjamin Gratz (now Mrs. Annie G. Clay) on Mill Street; then northwest along the street; then northwest parallel with the line of Benjamin Gratz's lot to the line of C. H. Morgan; then northwest with the line of Morgan and Sallie Story to the lot of Benjamin Gratz; then southeast with Gratz's line to the beginning. Lot eighty (80) front feet on Mill Street and extending to the back of equal width about 203'-6", the full depth of Mrs. H. Morgan's lot being a part of the lot on which said Mrs. H. Morgan resided (deed book no. 853-71-72; Fayette County Court House, Lexington, Kentucky).

B. Historical Context:

Tradition holds that the structure was built by Mrs. Benjamin (Maria B.) Dudley because she wished for a "small house" after spending her childhood in Loudoun.

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Thomas R. Martinson  
Kentucky Heritage  
Commission  
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Edited by: Eleni Silverman  
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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Talbert House is a variation of a vernacular more popular in the Midwest than the Bluegrass region. While wood detailing was widely used for the Victorian style, the choice of masonry wall fabric for this particular style was more common on the East coast than in the Midwest.
2. Condition of fabric: Generally good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 60'-2" (six irregular bays) x 80'-5"; two stories in height plus tower.

3. Wall construction: Common bond with alternating header/stretcher bank occurring at intervals of six courses. Exterior masonry has been painted grey. Interior walls are brick, load bearing.
4. Chimneys: Four; two to north, two to south. The largest, located north of the tower, is of brick, measuring approximately 1'-6" x 4'-0", with a three course brick "cap".

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The door opening for the main double doors is approximately 10' high; storm/screen doors are simply designed of wood, a single aperture in each for screening. The inner double doors are glazed and the etched panels are thought to be Tiffany glass. The panels below the glazing are elaborately carved.

Three entrance doors along the north elevation are of unexceptional design, two in the added wings are set below three-light transoms.

A south door which opens onto a later screened porch is set into a single glazed panel above two carved inset panels.

- b. Windows and shutters: With the exception of the two-light attic windows, the typical window of ca.1880 construction are one-over-one light set below decorative wood cornices under segmental-arch openings. The lower windows of the additions to the rear are six-over-six-light, those above are one-over-one and one-over-two-light. Only the lower (rear) windows are shuttered.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof above the c.1880 construction is a very shallow truncated hip resembling an extremely depressed mansard.

The gable roof of the major addition is of standing-seam metal construction, with the ridge running northwest-southeast. The shallow hip roof of the latest addition is of similar construction.

- b. Cornice, eaves: The simple bracketed wooden cornice extends around the structure. The cornice reads (upper to lower): cyma recta, double convex beading, corona, bracketing. The lower cornice on the north elevation reads (upper to lower): cyma recta, fillit, corona, cyma recta, corona (dentils), cyma recta.

- c. Tower: The engaged octagonal tower is the "strongest" design element. There are four dormers with decorative cornices. The roof is covered in grey slate, with decorative patterns in pastel red and green slate. The "Drum" below the iron railing is designed in an abstract motif, with thin archivolt and exaggerated keystones.
- C. Description of Interior: Interiors have recently been altered in the conversion from residence to duplex apartments. A main hall opens into flanking living and parlor areas. All walls are plastered; those of the hall and dining room are wallpapered. Interior trim is generally uncomplicated, the door framing somewhat more massive. The handsome tooled brass hardware is exceptionally fine. In the parlor, three mirrors and a fireplace, allegedly taken from Loudoun, have been installed.
- D. Site:
1. General setting and orientation: The Talbert House faces the Lexington Public Library to the southeast and Gratz Park to the east. To the southwest, the structure shares an informal and pleasant garden lot with adjacent Hunt-Morgan House.
  2. Enclosures: Lot boundaries along Mill Street and Hunt-Morgan properties are defined by simple wrought-iron fencing.
  3. Outbuildings: Two additions extend to the northwest; the dates of construction are unknown, although it is stylistically possible that the large predates major construction of ca.1880; the smaller apparently dates from a recent period. Brick (common bond) stable/garage to northwest measures approximately 25' x 35'; asphalt roof and 2" x 10" framing is deteriorating.
  4. Walks: A concrete sidewalk extends to the public sidewalk along Mill Street. Informal and intermittent brick walks generally circle the structure along both sides and back.
  5. Landscaping: Informal; the site is flat and slopes sharply to the Hunt-Morgan garden. Ground cover is ivy and bluegrass.

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